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**Title:**

Taxidermy workshops: differently figuring the working of bodies and bodies at work in the past

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**Abstract:**

Geographers have long demonstrated an interest in charting the geographical and bodily dynamics of work and employment. However within this scholarship very little attention has been paid to historical geographies of craftwork. This paper seeks to address this deficit whilst also engaging with the evident and evidentiary methodological issues associated with the historical study of practices worked through the body. To do so the paper experiments in the recuperation of the working spaces and working practice of three Scottish taxidermists. The creative challenge of this type of recovery work is to ascertain what can conceivably be said from those things that remain to mark the working of bodies and bodies at work at these sites. Yet from curated remainders we glean vital insights into the practices and class politics of 19<sup>th</sup> century natural history enquiry, the silenced agencies of a workshop devastated by WW1 and the more-than-human histories of elite blood sports and land ownership in the Scottish Highlands. And this is to emphasise that these materials, even in their textual representation in this paper, *count*: that they can create knowledge and invite affective experience of the past. Overall the paper seeks to emphasise the serious commitment to conceptual and methodological innovation required when geographers engage in researching bodies (both human and animal) 'at work' in the past.

**Keywords:** taxidermy, craftwork, biography, workshop, animal, ad-hoc archiving.

## Introduction

Geographers have long demonstrated an interest in charting the geographical and *bodily* dynamics of work and employment (see esp. McDowell 2003; 2009; 2013). However Chris McMorran has recently pointed out that geographers have been slow to respond to Linda McDowell and Gill Court's now two-decade-old call for geographers to research 'bodies at work' (McMorran 2012 citing McDowell and Court 1994, 732). Accordingly McMorran has reiterated the call, stating that the context-specific concerns of labour geographers can be brought into productive dialogue with the broader theoretical insights of 'bodily geographies' in order to *rein-vigorate* and *rein-corporate* workplace studies. However, while McMorran sketches out avenues and approaches for studying the 'embodied daily practices of workplaces' in the present, it is the concern of this paper to open up new spaces of enquiry into 'bodies at work' in the past (though see McDowell 2005). More specifically it seeks to offer conceptual and methodological resources for researching *historical* geographies of craftwork. This agenda emerges from research conducted into the development and practice of the craft of taxidermy. While this research has thus far focused on how this craft is worked through the body (Patchett 2015, 2016), this paper seeks to differently figure the working of bodies and bodies at work in taxidermy workshops of the past. In so doing it seeks to contribute to and align historical, animal and workplace geographies.

Firstly, by bringing insights from the literature on workplace geographies to bear in historical geography it will argue that the element of time does not make the connection to embodied labour impossible; that 'recovery work' can be used to analyze the workworlds of past artisans. In this way the article seeks to contribute to the increasing number of cultural-historical geographers attending to historical forms of embodiment and practice (e.g. see Lorimer 2003;

Griffin and Evans 2008; Glennie and Thrift 2012; Brigstocke 2014). Responding to the theoretical agenda set by non-representational theory, these researchers have sought to experiment with the recuperation and re-presentation of past (pre-discursive) practices. It is the contention of this paper that an attention to craft skills worked through the body can further bridge non-representational and historical geographic concerns. Secondly, the empirical focus on taxidermy offers the opportunity to explore animal bodies at work in the past. While animal geographers have done much to highlight the (mis)use of animal bodies in the contemporary workplace (see Buller 2015), this paper will again highlight that the element of time need not make the connection to the worked animal body impossible; substantial signs of animal life, or at least death, abound. In this way the paper can be read as contributing to the researching and writing of historical animal geographies (e.g. Lorimer and Whatmore 2009).

Taken overall, the paper aims to demonstrate how these geographical arguments and insights can be brought to bear on interdisciplinary scholarship recuperating the histories of craftwork and craftworkers (e.g. Sennett 2009; Harrod 2012; Sandiona and Partington 2013; Helland *et al* 2014). To do so, the paper will experiment in the recuperation of the working spaces and working practice of three Scottish taxidermists: George Sim (1835-1908) of Aberdeen, Charles Kirk (1872-1922) of Glasgow and John MacDonald (1884-1969) of Inverness. Following an argument that ‘potential awakenings’ (Benjamin 1999 cited in DeSilvey 2007, 413) reside in objects and materials that people gather around them and eventually discard in the course of their lives, the author creatively composes the taxidermists’ ‘leftovers’ - their business records, products, tools and materials etc. - to form ‘ad-hoc archives’ that offer glimpses of the lifeworlds of craftwork the taxidermists inhabited. In doing so the paper intends to reveal how

a focus on the embodied labour involved in taxidermy enables a series of wider geographical reflections to be made about the place of craft in the practice of science, the placement and working of bodies in the craft workshop, and the sensuous yet contentious human-animal relations involved in the crafts of animal display. However before such reflections can themselves be crafted a word, or two, is needed on the conceptual and methodological coordinates required when researching ‘bodies at work’ in the past.

### **Revisiting bodies at craftwork: developing a post-humanist biographical approach**

The main goal of this paper is to develop a supple approach to researching ‘bodies at work’ in the past, whilst also engaging with the evident and evidentiary issues associated with creatively curating and narrating historical geographies of craftwork. While geographers are demonstrating increasing interest in the geographies - cultural, political, and economic - of craftwork, they have been largely rooting their craft concerns firmly in the present (though see Gibson 2016). So far those engaged in researching ‘craft geographies’ or ‘making cultures’ either seek to underline the social, economic and political potentials of artisanal practices and workplaces for responding to post-capitalist relations (for review see Carr and Gibson 2016), or are engaged in in-depth ethnographic studies of the practiced, embodied and more-than-human dimensions of craft-skills worked through the body in contemporary workshops (O’Connor 2007, Paton 2013, Patchett 2015). Moreover, while McMorran (2012, 490) promotes ‘working participant observation’ as a way of researching the complex embodied interactions taking shape in the workplace, historical geographers hit upon a problem when attempting to access past bodily work practices and places: much of the everyday embodied past is unspoken and unwritten and therefore goes unrecorded. However in the face of perceived archival absence the method of biography offers a way forward. Historical

geographers of science have, for example, demonstrated that according greater sensitivity to the 'spaces of a life' can offer new and revealing ways of exploring past working lives. David Livingstone has developed a form of 'geographical biography' in order to explore and underline 'the mutual making of science and scientist' across site and situation (Livingstone 2003, 183). By offering atmospheric and performative descriptions of sites of 'science making', ranging from coffee houses and laboratories to national museums and field sites, Livingstone has helped to recast the epistemic underpinning of biography whereby the charting of the 'locational particulars of a life has become the real desideratum' (Gagen et al 2007, 6).

However while such scholarship has made an effort to write 'embodied, [spatially] sensitive and revealing biographies' (McGeachan et al 2012, 180), in many cases 'space' has simply taken the place of 'time' as the narratological device by which past working lives are ordered and measured. Moreover there is still a prevalent tendency within this literature to view life from the point of view of individual human agents. To counter such overtly humanistic conceptions of biography it requires shifting attention away from the individual agent and to instead focus on the '*practices and skills*, which produce people, selves, and worlds' (Thrift 2000, 216). Here the emphasis is less on charting the individual life history of the craft practitioner, or indeed the afterlife of one of their animal-artefacts (e.g. Patchett 2008, Patchett et al 2011), but is rather on exploring and exposing the lifeworlds of practice which compose and produce practitioner, craft and product. This move firstly requires understanding people (dead or alive) as 'ill defined constellations', which 'consist of a spread of biographical events and memories of events, and a dispersed category of material objects, traces, and leavings, which can be attributed to a person' (Thrift 2000, 220, quoting Gell 1998, 222). Secondly, it requires working with an understanding of (craft) practices as 'material bodies of work or styles that have gained

enough stability over time, through, for example, the establishment of corporeal routines and specialised devices, to reproduce themselves' (Thrift 2008, 8). Following such a non-representational post-humanist logic, lives (both human and non) and craft practices are not the properties of individual actors but are rather distributed, relational and, therefore, precarious achievements. This said, it is important not to present body-practices as somehow transcendental<sup>i</sup> and to acknowledge that they are tethered in particular times and places even if they are spread out as 'ill-defined constellations'.

However even with such an acknowledgement inherent methodological difficulties arise when applying such a constellatory approach to the study of past craft practices worked through (and on) the body, as often very little remains to evidence such resolutely *historical* constellations of craftwork. Yet, as DeSilvey (2007, 413) has pointed out, 'potential awakenings' reside in the objects and materials that people gather around them and eventually discard in the course of their lives. Here DeSilvey follows Benjamin's (1999) theory of historical constellations, whereby the past as loss and degradation is not occluded but is revealed through the rag-picking work of cultural recycling. A growing number of geographers are drawing creative resource from Benjamin's constellatory method of historical assemblage to explore and performatively narrate *historical* geographies of practice, skill and embodiment (see Mills 2013). These researchers are purposefully assembling and rehabilitating diffuse and diverse historical remains in order to glean insights into the eventful and lived character of the past. The deliberate curation of historical remainders to compose 'ad-hoc archives' must be understood, according to Lorimer (2009, 259), as an adaptive mode of inquiry where 'the massing of remainders, redundant objects, fragments and discarded substances dating from the past offers a renewable resource for the undertaking of historical research'. Such a

constellatory and curatorial mode of archival enquiry is therefore alive to the alterity of past lives (human or otherwise), events and places recognising that what remains of them is always going to be partial, provisional and incomplete.

This mode of archival enquiry was also necessitated by the subject matter of this paper; there being no guild or centralised archive relating to the craft of taxidermy.<sup>ii</sup> The onus was therefore on the author to locate and assemble any remainders relating to the taxidermy practice of George Sim, Charles Kirk and John MacDonald.<sup>iii</sup> The biographical subjects were therefore not chosen, but encountered *as* ‘a spread of biographical events and memories of events, and a dispersed category of material objects, traces, and leavings’ (Thrift 2000, 220, *as above*). It follows that a creative engagement with, and reconfiguration of, the taxidermist’s remainders – i.e. their tools, products, correspondences, business records and accoutrements relating to their taxidermy practice - might begin to propose, albeit partially, the lifeworlds of craftwork they once composed. In order to avoid colonising the traces of these men, by putting them in ‘biographical order’, in the following analysis we will make a series of ‘visits’ to the places of work of the three taxidermists identified.<sup>iv</sup> To do so is to place emphasis on the locational particulars of lives-lived and crafts practiced, where subjectivity, craft and site are understood as co-produced relational achievements. It is also to emphasize the importance of the space of the workshop to histories of craftwork. In what follows a portrait, a floor-plan and a collection of artefacts provide us with an entry-point into the taxidermists’ workshops and thus to the working of bodies and bodies at work at these sites.



Workshop visit 1: the workshop of George Sim, 14 King Street, Aberdeen



Figure 1 'George Sim, Naturalist, in his workshop, Aberdeen', 1896 painting by Rudolf Christen, oil on canvas, 56.2 x 47.2 cm cm (estimate), Aberdeen Art Gallery Collections Services, Acc. No. ABDAG014134.

This rare portrait (1896) of a taxidermist at work captures the atmospheric and sensory world of a commercial taxidermy workshop in the late nineteenth-century (Figure 1), making it an ideal source for exploring ‘the mutual making of science and scientist’ (Livingstone 2003, 183). The portrait subject is George Sim (1835-1908), a taxidermist-cum-naturalist who owned the then most notable taxidermy and curiosity business in Aberdeen. While Sim’s status as a commercial taxidermist in the relatively isolated position of the North-East of Scotland might undermine the description of his practice there as ‘science’, his associated practices of field-study and collecting ensure that his practice, both within and beyond his workshop, bridged both scientific and commercial life in the nineteenth century. Science at this moment was in the earliest stages of professionalization and those involved in its pursuit were strikingly heterogenous – antiquarians, medical practitioners, natural philosophers, writers, natural historians, and other learned men (and in some instances women) made up a kaleidoscopic community. As Ludmilla Jordanova (2000, 74) explains, ‘many able practitioners [of science] were skilled artisans or tradesmen’, and while their social position and influence were necessarily different to university-educated and financially independent gentlemen, their contribution to science should be considered no less relevant. Furthermore, science at that time was being practiced in a variety of popular and commercial arenas including, ‘libraries, lecture theatres, salons, nurseries, observatories, churches, workshops, artist’s studios, mechanics’ institutes, learned societies, stock farms, shipyards, game reserves and so on’ (Livingstone 2003, 85). Taxidermy as a craft has historically oscillated between scientific, artistic and commercial practice. The important point to remember when studying sites of past scientific practice is recognising that such sites ‘become what they are through the activities that ‘take place’ in them’ (Livingstone 2003, 85-86).

However, while non-representational geographers have employed immersive methods and performative modes of address to attend to the ‘taking place’ of practices of the now (Anderson and Harrison 2012), for the historical geographer much is contingent on ‘the availability of ‘sources’ which conjure (or at least take us closer to) ‘the smells, sounds, sights and feelings of (past) embodied experience’ (Lorimer 2003: 202). This does not mean conventional archival sources should be abandoned altogether, as, according to Lorimer, ‘creative engagement with, and imaginative interpretation of such sources’ holds much potential for recuperating forms of the non-representational (Ibid: 203). So what can we glean about the lifeworld of a taxidermist-cum-naturalist by closely studying this portrait, depicting the ‘taking-place’ of taxidermy practice in a commercial workshop? Although Sim is the central focus of the painting, seated centrally and ‘setting-up’ what appears to be a heron, the busyness of the scene ensures many other things compete for the viewer’s attention: an elegantly mounted pink-winged flamingo stands proud to the bottom left, in front of a mounted otter awaiting the finishing touches of paint to the ground-work on its stand; a string of avian study-skins have been hung out to dry in front of the centre window; the trophy mounts of a bull and stag line the adjacent interior walls; Sim’s assistant stands right of centre skinning what appears to be a game bird in the light of the window; and a menagerie of unidentifiable skins hang from the ceiling. Sim’s work-benches are also cluttered with various tools, preparations and commissions in various stages of completion. The mounts awaiting his immediate attention seem to depict the various stages of taxidermy practice; from the intact carcass of a mallard, to a yet-to-be encased fish trophy, to a near-finished glass-domed bird mount. What do these observations of things in the making tell us? First, the great assortment of commissions littering the workshop and the presence of an assistant indicate that Sim’s business must have been a prosperous one. Second, the variety of commissions on display

also indicates the diversity of Sim's taxidermy practice: covering the preparation of study-skins for cabinet collections, the mounting of fishing and hunting trophies and the more elaborate work involved in the setting up of cased mounts depicting specimens in a 'natural' scene. This, in turn, is suggestive of the sensory human-animal relations that take-place during the taxidermy process and the diverse (dead) animal geographies that intersect with the workshop. Finally, the diversity of the commissions is also suggestive of the diverse types of customer that he must have attracted; from naturalist collectors to the 'sporting set' to the more decorative demands of wealthy estate owners.

While this portrait (Figure 1) offers a glimpse into the sensory world of a nineteenth-century taxidermy workshop, and is suggestive of the wider human-animal cultures in which it was enmeshed, it must be cautioned that a portrait often offers an idealised image of the sitter and scene. Other source materials are therefore required to shed light on the craftings that take place and shape both within and beyond Sim's workshop. A recovered poster<sup>v</sup> advertising Sim's taxidermy and curiosity shop gives further insight into its workings (Figure 2).



# GEORGE SIM,

Naturalist, Furrier, and Antiquarian,

Has always on hand a choice collection of  
Furs, Lion, Tiger, Leopard, and Bear Skins;  
Carriage and Perambulator Rugs, Ostrich  
Feathers, Natural History Specimens.

**Osteological Preparations suitable  
for students.**

MICROSCOPES, ARTIFICIAL HUMAN EYES.

Ancient Silver - Mounted Guns and  
Pistols, Single and Double - Handed  
Swords, Arm Shields, and Trophies,  
suitable for Halls.

Coins, Medals, Antique Watches, Ivory  
Miniatures, and Antique Gold and Silver  
Jewellery.

OLD AND MODERN PAINTINGS.

Ancient China, Carved and Inlaid Cabinets, Bureaus, Chairs, &c.

IMPLEMENTS OF THE STONE AND BRONZE PERIOD.

HIGHLAND ORNAMENTS, DIRKS, SKEAN DHUS, &c.  
SPORRANS for Men and Boys always on hand, and made to order in  
Modern or Antique Design.

FURS and SKINS of all kinds Cured, Cleaned, and Made up.

**14 KING ST.,  
ABERDEEN.**

Figure 2, Poster for 'George Sim, Naturalist, Furrier and Antiquarian', Image: Pat Morris.

The poster informs us that Sim crafts and carries a wide variety of curiosities and curios: from furs, rugs and natural history specimens of various kinds, to osteological preparations for medical and zoological students (including artificial human eyes), to various forms of antique weaponry, and other collectables. The poster also indicates that George Sim preferred to go by the more respectable and learned titles of naturalist and antiquarian rather than as simply taxidermist. The *'Industries of Scotland'* listing of 1889 offers a detailed description of his shop premises offering a valuable insight into its architectures and atmospheres:

*'George Sim, Naturalist and Furrier and Antiquarian.'*

*...The premises comprise the extensive ground floor of a lofty three-storeyed building. The establishment has two large windows, well adapted for display and lighting purposes, and very interesting show of specimens of the varied treasures within is at all times exhibited to the passing public. The large interior measures about fifty feet by thirty, and is extremely well and systematically arranged and fitted up. These include a splendid collection of military weapons of all kinds, bearing upon historical incidents familiar to the readers of Scottish story, as well as those of British pre-historic interest; a very curious assortment of clocks of all kinds, as well as watches and articles of antique jewellery of various kinds. In the fine art department Mr. Sim has managed to secure from a variety of sources a very remarkable lot of rare and valuable oil paintings and engravings. As an able and ingenious taxidermist Mr. Sim is now widely known, and his skill in this respect is often engaged by naturalists and collectors of birds and other specimens of the animal and insect world; while his own collection is both large, varied and extremely valuable, and attracts the attention of scientific men generally. He has a splendid collection of furs and preserved fur-bearing animals, while his general assemblage of miscellaneous antiques and curios generally, of all possible kinds, is certainly not excelled by many museums and public collections of pretentious importance. In every way the establishment is one of extreme interest and curiosity to everyone. But Mr. Sim has not formed his interesting collection for amusement or pleasure only. He is constantly adding to, and sending away articles from the whole of his departments, and many other private and public collections are regularly being extended and enhanced by goods supplied by him in the way of business. He is becoming very widely known throughout the country, and his trading connection already extends over the whole of Britain; and his clientele bids fair, in a very short time, to extend to even wider bounds. The whole concern is under his own personal care and attentive supervision.'*<sup>vi</sup>

The listing sketches a vivid scene of Sim's shop floor, its contents and the kinds of patron who would frequent it. Sim's shop space, located below his attic atelier on the third floor,<sup>vii</sup> would have provided the perfect opportunity to show off his skills as a taxidermist-cum-

naturalist and to display his various other learned interests and expertise. As ‘the whole concern was under his own personal care and attentive supervision’, it would have allowed him to select and carefully curate what was to be displayed so as best to reflect his skills, interests, knowledge, and expertise, and thus manage how he was perceived by those frequenting the shop, and up to a point his reputation beyond. While, as already outlined, many able practitioners of science in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were skilled artisans and tradesmen, the title of scientist or in this case ‘naturalist’ was usually reserved for financially independent gentlemen. In order to be taken seriously by the scientific community both as a superior craftsman *and* as a fellow naturalist, Sim must have recognised the opportunity his showroom afforded for promoting himself as a noteworthy naturalist-collector and antiquarian. As the listing details his personal collection was of ‘great repute’ and through exhibition Sim would have been able to emphasise his standing as a man of learning as well as being a skilled craftsman. The listing’s description of the shop as a museum corroborates the reading that the premises was seen and experienced as a display space or showroom as well as a site of everyday commerce.



**Figure 3, A 'George Sim' Labelled Case, Image: Pat Morris**

Another way of advertising his skills and knowledge-practices as a taxidermist-cum-naturalist would have been through his taxidermy mounts (Figure 3). This labelled case of an Indian Pheasant offers the rare<sup>viii</sup> opportunity of inspecting Sim's craftsmanship. Commercial taxidermists operating in the same period often developed their own distinctive styles, partly in response to the varied requirements of their customers, and thus some taxidermists tended to specialise in the production of certain types of commission (see Morris 1993). While we know from the portrait that Sim produced trophy mounts and study specimens, he would also have been engaged in setting-up decorative display cases like this Indian Pheasant. In the mid-late nineteenth century there was increasing demand for decorative pieces like this as it was considered highly fashionable to have cases of colourful foreign birds brightening up gloomy Victorian parlours. These decorative cases and 'shades' (glass-dome mounts) were often crammed with a multitude of birds in colourful combination, often with 'a cavalier disregard



for ornithological exactitude' as the poses adopted were usually designed to show off the plumage to best effect (Morris 1993, 246). Sim's Indian pheasant case evidences that, while showing off the plumage of the bird to good effect, he presents the bird in an anatomically correct pose, demonstrating his knowledge of the bird family in life and death. He had also attempted to display the bird in a naturalistic setting. According to Morris (1993, 246), 'naturalist taxidermists ... used either found and dried natural materials or artificial leaves and flowers (available from wreath and funeral suppliers)' to present a suggestion of the specimen's natural habitat. Due to time and monetary constraints these were merely 'suggestions' and not nearly as accurate or elaborate as the museum 'habitat dioramas' being produced in the same period (see Wonders 1993). Still Sim's attempt, when considered alongside his ability to craft a representative specimen, is indicative of his commitment to realism. For the researcher it also underlines taxidermy mounts and cases as important sources of evidence of the skilled labour of the taxidermist and the state of the animal.

Sim's craftsmanship was coveted beyond his local area as a letter between Sim and the celebrated Scottish naturalist John A. Harvie-Brown attests. The letter, a copy of which is held in the J. A. Harvie-Brown Papers at the National Museum Scotland, details how Harvie-Brown was encouraging Sim to set up business closer to him in Glasgow:

*And now I wish to say something about another matter. Supposing you had plenty of work to do in Glasgow, had the support of the Kelvin Grove Museum and Natural History Society, and work to do from at least three of our principle scotch Collectors resident in, or near Glasgow for a commencement – would you be inclined to leave your present business in Aberdeen and come to Glasgow? There is plenty of room in Glasgow for a really good taxidermist and I'll tell you why. Mr MacCulloch is, there is no doubt, a really good workman when he chooses, but he and his sons keep the work entrusted to them beyond all reasonable time and of late they have even refused to take in birds to be made up as cabinet skins. In fact, Mr McC is alone in his profession in Glasgow and thinks himself a little king. He tried to charge Mr Thomson of the Kelvin Grove Museum £10 for stuffing a stag and when told that £3 was what was asked by other workmen he replied "O yes*

*Landseer painted deer and so did ither folk, buy ye would'na pay Landseer just the same as ye would pay ither folk". This shows the conceit of the man. I asked Thomson the other day and he would be able to give you work and I know that there is a general feeling against the Macculloch's now.*

*I believe that you have a steady, good business in Aberdeen, and that perhaps it would be a great risk to leave it, but that of course would be for yourself to consider. For my own part, I may safely say that I would with pleasure send you all my work to do in the making up of skins or skinning specimens.*

*Of course you will consider this letter private and only for your own perusal. It is intended for no-one else.*

*Believe me, yours truly,  
John, A. Harvie-Brown.<sup>ix</sup>*

Harvie-Brown's proposal that Sim set up business in Glasgow may have been tempting as the possibility of dealing with prestigious institutions like the Kelvingrove Museum and Glasgow Natural History Society would appeal to a taxidermist-naturalist. However it also hints at the precarious place of craft and the craftsman in the practice of nineteenth-century science. Harvie-Brown's derogation Mr McC's prices and appeals to artistry indicate the merit he placed on good craftsmanship. Therefore while it is important in the present day to acknowledge the important contribution artisans and tradesmen made to the production of science in the past, it is clear from Harvie-Brown's letter that the work of tradesmen like Mr McC and Sim was not acknowledged in the same way by their contemporary gentlemen-scientists. Rather than securing a superior craftsmanship Harvie-brown's proposal was more likely motivated by a desire to increase trade competition in Glasgow and therefore keep prices low for him and his fellow gentleman-naturalists. Returning to Sim's portrait (Figure 1) it becomes clearer that while his workshop connects him to various learned and scientific networks of practice, the volume of work it produces might also restrict his ability to fully engage with them.

22nd FEBRUARY 1948. JOHN McCORRISKEN.

1896 to Established 1896, owing to  
Fire removed to Great Western RD  
opposite St. George RD. underground  
1920.

ROUND TOWER  
STAIRS TO  
PITCH PINTERS  
ENTRANCE  
RENFREW ST  
CLOSED NOW

ENTRANCE TO PLASTER  
DOOR  
BCH AND CLAY  
BACK OF SMITH  
WOOD SHOP  
RENFREW ST.

STAIR TO FIRST ABOVE  
HOT ROOM VARIOUS ARTICLES  
KEPT HERE

HOT ROOM SMALL LONG STONE

OUTSIDE BACK DOOR.  
ROOF CORRUGATED IRON.

ALSO TROUBLED WITH MICE  
AND RATS. CAUGHT IN TRAPS

DAMP BOXES LAY BELOW BENCHES  
TO KEEP BIRD AND ANIMALS SEET  
AFTER SMOKING  
CAN'T REMEMBER BOYS,  
MC NEE, STIRLING, OR CRICHTON.  
HAVING BENCH OF OWN.  
WOULD COME AFTER ME  
AS I ADVANCED IN TAXIDERMAY.  
IN WAR UPSET EVERYTHING.

MC CLINTOCKS BENCH STOUTS BENCH COLANDROUS BENCH

QUEENS ARCADE

SHELVES WITH  
BUILT IN BOXES  
TO HOLD AFRICAN  
EUROPEAN TROPHIES  
NAME PAINTED WITH  
RED LONDON BOX

MR WATERS BENCH

GRASS STONE SMALL  
MR KIRKS  
TABLE WITH  
CORRESPONDENCE  
ETC

DUNCAN  
BENCH

BECKETS  
BENCH

FRAZER'S BENCH McCORRISKEN'S  
BENCH BENCH

DOWNSTAIRS  
TO  
WOODEN TANK  
WITH DILUTED  
CARBOLIC ACID  
RAIL ABOVE  
HANG SKINS  
TO DRIP  
ABOVE CELLAR  
SMALL GLASS  
TILES TO LET  
DAYLIGHT IN  
CHIPPED WINDOW  
BRASS PHOTO  
CUTTING WINDOW  
CLEANED. ORALIE  
ACID

DOOR  
BELL  
PHONE

ENTRANCE TO KIRK'S

ENTRANCE TO DUNCAN'S  
HANDMADE CIGARS  
CIGARETTES.

PAVEMENT

WELLINGTON ARCADE.  
POB. NICKERSON'S TANNERY  
SMITH'S WOOD SHOP

STAIRS TO

ENTRANCE TO PROPERTY FOR SALE

LOST PROPERTY  
ABOVE KIRKS

LOST PROPERTY  
ABOVE KIRKS

INSIDE

PAVEMENT

PAVEMENT

18

This floor plan depicts the taxidermy workshop of Charles Kirk & Co of 156 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow (Figure 4).<sup>x</sup> The floor plan, as indicated by a note on the back, has been drafted by an ex-employee of the firm, John McCorriskien on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1948 and it gives a record of the firm layout '*before the 14 war*'.<sup>xi</sup> Although the writing is faded, it is possible to make out most of what has been written and marked down. Such faint remembrances and traces of working life are considered 'primary sources' by craft biographers as often little remains to mark the lifeworlds of craft practitioners (see Helland *et al* 2014). However rather than offering the trace or remembrance of a single practitioner, the floor plan opens up the possibility of revisiting a workshop as a site of practice, which in turn invites a non-representational approach to the use of historical documents (e.g. see Evan 2008). For just as the floor plan marks down the workshop's physical layout and architectures it also offers the possibility of experiencing what Peggy Phelan (1993) calls the 'unmarked' – i.e. the immediacy of fleeting sounds, ineffable odours and somatic routines - that may not be marked as 'here', yet palpably still reverberate' (Thrift 2000: 214). On close inspection the spidery schematic offers both intimate and sensate details not just of the layout of the Sauchiehall Street shop but of the organisation of the employees and equipment and therefore reverberations of its taxidermy practice.

The plan discloses, for example, that the Sauchiehall Street shop - '*established in 1896*' - was spread over three levels; the main street-level floor where all the workbenches and employees were organised, a smaller basement level where the tanning and drying equipment was kept, and a second floor used for storage purposes. Focusing on the main shop floor, layout suggests that the premises would be more accurately described as a workshop. While the owner's desk is situated to meet any incoming trade from the street outside, the rest of the space is largely

dedicated to the employees' workbenches. Furthermore, McCorrisken's note that Mr Kirk's table dealt with correspondence - '*Mr Kirk's table with correspondence etc.*' - suggests that most of the firm's trade was probably initiated through correspondence rather than by customers frequenting the shop, which presumably meant that the shop floor could be used predominantly as a work-space rather than for displaying stock and merchandise. The fact that the premises had a '*door bell*' further suggests that it was not frequented by customers particularly often and predominantly functioned as a workshop. The number of work-benches surrounding Kirk's table suggests that the firm was a successful taxidermy practice attracting considerable custom. Each of the eight work-benches was assigned to a different staff member; from left, Mr Wotherspoon, McClintock, Stout, Colquhon, McCorrisken, Frazer, Becket and Duncan. The main craftsmen were assisted by three '*boys*': McNee, Stirling and Crichton. In addition to Kirk, the main floor housed twelve employees in total suggesting a hive of activity. This, taken with sights, sounds and smells associated with taxidermy practice - '*damp boxes lay below benches to keep bird and animals soft after skinning*', '*troubled with rats and mice*', would have ensured that anyone frequenting the premises would have met with an overwhelming sensory experience.

The downstairs basement houses a '*wooden tank with carbolic acid*' and a '*rail above to hang skins to drip*', indicating that the firm was equipped to deal with the soaking and tanning of large animal skins on site and thus the decaying flesh and fetid odours that would accompany them. Above Kirk's (see to the left of Mr Wotherspoon's bench) lost property was stored along with '*shelves with built in boxes to hold African, European trophies*', indicating that the firm must have dealt in the setting-up of trophy heads. To the back of the property on the street floor level there is '*a hot room*' with a small gas stove, presumably where skins and finished mounts were stored to dry.

The flat above the hot room was used to store '*various articles*'. Taken overall, the floor plan suggests that Kirk's was equipped to deal with all aspects of taxidermy practice on site; from skinning and tanning to mounting and drying. Going by the number of workmen employed it was also successful enough to deal with a large amount of commissions at any one time. McCorrisken's note that the boys McNee, Stirling and Crichton '*would have come after me as I advanced in taxidermy*' suggests that the firm also had an apprentice scheme, further implying that it was a well-established business.

Notes copied on the back of the floor plan reveal that specialisations were also being encouraged at the firm. The notes indicate that the workmen specialised in different aspects and branches of the craft: Donnelly focused on '*skinning and cleaning specimens*', while Becket '*was excellent at bird taxidermy*', McLintock and Fraser were '*concerned mostly with large mammals and mounted heads, including lion, tiger, polar bear and so on*', while Wotherspoon was '*mainly concerned with fish mounting and casing and case-work*'. McCorrisken worked at '*all types of work*' presumably to fulfil apprenticeship training. While these notes begin to hint at the embodied routines of particular workmen, they also begin to make sensible the spectral agencies of the dead animal bodies that inhabited the site. Although an increasing number of cultural and historical geographers are employing motifs of haunting, phantasmagoria and the spectral to unsettle traditional conceptions of, and engagements with, archival material (e.g. Mills 2013), for the most part they focus on the presence and presencing of human lives. By contrast Sarah Whatmore and Jamie Lorimer have developed 'ways of reading, viewing and handling' historic documents in order to write 'more-than-human' histories (Lorimer and Whatmore 2009: 675). For example, they circumvented the auto-biographical focus of historic hunting accounts by 'track[ing] down surviving artefacts from the period and visit[ing] the field-sites where the

hunting took place' in a bid to materialize the multisensual and multispecies presences and practices of nineteenth-century Ceylonese elephant hunting. Therefore while the floor plan is suggestive of the beastly agencies of animal de and re-composition in the workshop, a small collection of correspondence between the firm and the Kelvingrove Museum can help to further flesh them out.

The letters, written between Charles Kirk and Kelvingrove natural history curator J McNaught Campbell over the period of 1899-1913,<sup>xiii</sup> give an insight into the sensuous yet contentious human-animal relations and practices involved in the crafts of animal display. For example in a letter dated April 7<sup>th</sup> 1899 Kirk 'Cannot recommend the stuffing of the Deer Seal. Hair is very loose, as animals is casting its coat.' and on Sept 8<sup>th</sup> of the same year he regrets to inform Mr Campbell 'of the loss of another of your specimens :- the Rhesus Monkey sent two weeks ago has slipped all over the back despite my best efforts to cure it. It was very fat, and hair came away when scraping it off.' In writing the loss of these specimens Kirk imparts a sense of the challenging, unpredictable and oleaginous properties of the animal skins with which he was attempting to work with, or rather, against. The discussion of skin 'slipping' and being scrapped off also alludes to the putrid and olfactory agencies of decomposing animal matter that would have lingered long on the body, escaping the confines of the workshop. As well as imparting sensory information about the animal matter Kirk and his workmen were working with and against, we also get information about the wider animal geographies the workshop was connected to through this practice. For example, in a letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 1899 we learn Kirk has received 'a tiger in flesh today from Bostock', asking Mr Campbell if the bones and skull are 'any use?'. Bostock's refers to E. H. Bostock's 'Scottish Zoo' located at Cowcaddens Cross in Glasgow. Formerly a travelling menagerie Bostock had created a permanent base for

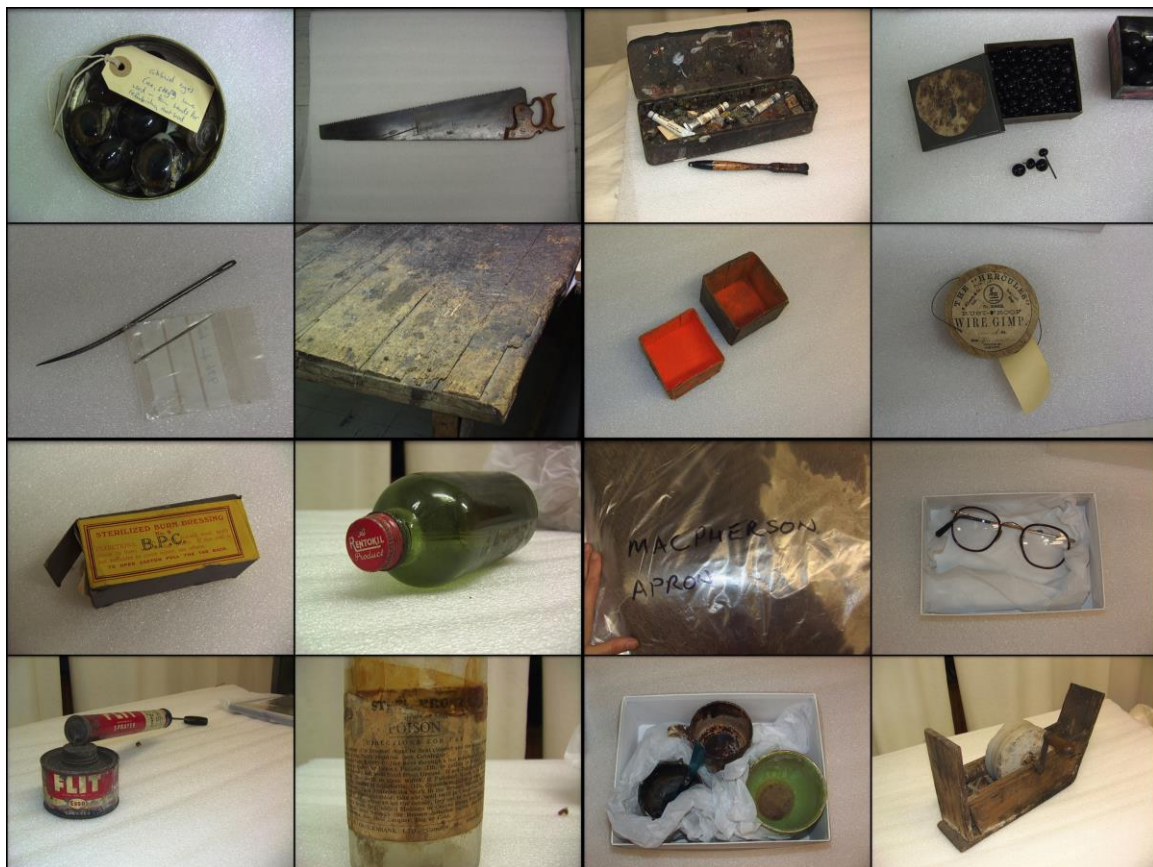
his animals there in 1897, making it a local source of fresh and exotic animal cadavers for Kirk's workshop. A more regular source of animal parts (usually in the forms of skins and bones) would have likely come through local and colonial hunting networks as a letter to the museum on December 21<sup>st</sup> suggests. In the letter Kirk lists '4 masks of African Antelopes' that he is sending to the museum as presented by 'Mr J McNeil, S. Rhodesia'. Mr McNeil was likely a professional or hobby big-game hunter who was looking for a good home and perhaps remuneration for his excess haul. This information when taken with McCorricken's recollection that Kirk's workshop had '*shelves with built in boxes to hold African, European trophies*' indicates that Kirk's workshop was well-connected to both local and colonial animal trade networks and in turn to the practices of animal capture and killing associated with them.

When taken together, the floorplan and business correspondences begin to build a picture of the workings of Kirk's & Co at both the intimate corporeal and wider worldly scales. However if we turn back to McCorricken's floor plan we learn that the '*14 war upset everything*', and it documents that Stout, Duncan and Colquhoun were all '*killed 14 war*'. Reviewing the floor plan with the knowledge that the three men who sat at '*Duncan's bench*', '*Stout's bench*' and '*Colquhoun's Bench*' all tragically perished in WW1 gives the sketch an added poignancy, a mark of the men's presence, if not their specialisms, at the firm before their lives were cut short. We also learn from McCorricken's notes that: '*owing to a fire removed to Great Western Road opposite St George RD Underground 1920*', meaning that the workshop was active at the Sauchihall street site for 24 years. Thus while McCorricken's documentation of the workshop was roughly drafted from memory in 1948 long after the firm had been ravaged by WW1 and had moved after the fire, it is basically all that remains to mark the working of bodies and bodies at work at the site: a precious yet sketchy record of both its layout and inhabitants (human and animal, living and



dead) and inner workings, fixtures and fittings. And by applying a nonrepresentational approach to the study of historical documents we gain a sense of the workshop ‘taking place’ - the immediacy of fleeting sounds, ineffable odours, somatic routines and animal agencies - that are not marked as ‘there’, yet palpably still reverberate.

### Workshop visit 3: Macpherson’s Sporting Stores, Inverness



**Figure 5, Montage of the material remains John Macdonald’s taxidermy workshop, of MacPherson's Sporting Stores, Inverness. All images taken by the Author at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, collections reference: IMAG: INVMG 1976/42/1-168.**

The image above depicts the material remains of Macpherson’s Sporting Stores taxidermy workshop. Located on Inglis Street, Inverness the store was the supplier and taxidermist of choice to the Highland’s huntin', shootin' and fishin' fraternity for over eighty years. Falling

out of business in the 1970s, the workaday material remains of firm's taxidermy workshop were acquired by Inverness Museum, recognising that they were the only remainders of the most notable taxidermy workshop in Inverness, a town which had been a centre for taxidermy for over a century through its enormous trade in sporting mementoes.<sup>xiii</sup> The purchase largely consisted of tools, materials and equipment used by the firm's chief taxidermist, John MacDonald. MacDonald (1884-1969) had worked at the firm for fifty-eight years and his tools and equipment had lain virtually untouched since his death in 1969.

The workshop contents, once on public display, are now stored in the museum collections.<sup>xiv</sup> Removed from their original situation or documentary context, objects and materials can lose meaning and significance. Yet, by working 'in the grain of things' and with a knowledge of taxidermy practice, the tools, objects and illegible materials once part of MacDonald's taxidermy workshop can, as DeSilvey has argued, be made to suggest 'obsolete networks of use and affinity' (DeSilvey 2007, 401). For example, an oversized needle, boxes of brown no. 24 artificial eyes, a saw with chipped teeth and MacDonald's workbench covered in saw notches, strange oily stains, and patches of waxy build-up all reference the heavy labour involved in the main specialism of MacDonald's taxidermy work: the setting up of stag heads. By comparison, fine paintbrushes, no. 4 black eyes, vivid paint colours and Japanese wire gimp for 'repairing bird's legs' bring to mind to the more delicate bird and fish taxidermy work MacDonald was also employed in. A copy of Gilbert's *Chemical Magic* when viewed in conjunction with a bottle marked 'Poison' and a box containing *Sterilized Burn Dressing no.9* are suggestive of the hazardous nature of taxidermy work, a craft that often requires the use of poisonous and harmful substances. A 'Flit' fly-sprayer and other Rentokil products also hint at the pungent working environment that MacDonald would have had to endure when

working with decaying animal remains. Yet it is the more personal items like MacDonald's spectacles and wonderfully appropriate deer-skin apron that are most evocative. Caitlin DeSilvey, following Benjamin's theory of historical constellations, has pointed out that 'potential awakenings' reside in objects and materials that people gather around them and eventually discard in the course of their lives and that encounters with such discarded items can 'propose empathetic connection with the people who made and handled them' (DeSilvey 2007, 413, 417).

Macpherson's sporting store's material remains not only propose empathetic connections with the bodies at work at the site, they also tentatively propose connections with the bodies being worked-on. For example, other items in the collection allude to the wider human-animal cultures of deer-stalking and gamekeeping that MacDonald was entangled in through his taxidermy practice at the store. For example some leftover kill tags, noting kills at 'Coire Mhor' in 1912 and 'Ben Damph' in 1958, reference his work in mounting sporting mementos. These tags also archive the absent-presence of the acts of killing and the animals themselves. While it has been argued that animal evidence is often scarce and indelibly marked by anthropomorphism within the historical record (Fudge 2002), substantial signs of animal life, or at least death, abound from MacDonald's workaday material remainders. Actual animal remains, including bits of jaw-bone and teeth, horn cores and several sets of antlers, bespeak the beastly presence of dead animal bodies, while other materials like artificial glass eyes and other replacement animal-parts bear witness to the crafting of animal bodies by human hands.



**Figure 6, Remains suggestive of the beastly and animal histories of MacPherson's Sporting Stores. Images all taken by the author at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, collections reference: IMAG: INVMG 1976/42/1-168.**

The store's six 'stuffing books', archived alongside the material remains and spanning the years from 1917-1968,<sup>xv</sup> record the many thousands of animals that were sent to the store to be 'set-up' by MacDonald, underlining the scale of the enterprise and the cultures of killing that he was implicated in as the town's taxidermist of choice. The customer lists, recorded at the front of each of the six ledgers, also read as a 'who's who' of the British aristocracy, hinting at the uneven power-relations associated with blood sports and patterns of landownership in the Scottish Highlands. Lorimer (2000) has highlighted that the concentrated pattern of landownership in the Scottish Highlands can be understood in relation to the elite leisure activity of deerstalking. Opening the 1917-1928 ledger at any random page would certainly

seem to confirm this. For example a page from the September of 1921 records that Lord Sands of Jura wanted eight stag heads mounted and five skins cleaned, Major Benskin of Ardverkerie estates wanted 5 stag heads mounted and one 'skull only' cleaned and the Sutherland estates requested that 24 stag-heads be mounted on 'dark polished oak shields' for various patrons of pretentious importance. Deerstalking was often dubbed 'a millionaire's sport' at the time, as the shooting of stags on first-class estates like the Sutherlands would cost nearly £100 a day and that was before the additional cost of having the head mounted and shipped (Mingay 2000: 484). Yet it was not just the wealthy nobility that called on MacDonald's services. For example, the 'stock' section of the 1935-1938 stuffing book details that MacDonald was receiving many skins of otter, wildcat, fox and various types of birds of prey from gamekeepers from the highland estates. These animals and birds were considered a threat to the populations of grouse and pheasant that were bred on the estates. Macpherson's would pay for these skins then send them on, at an inflated price, to either C.W. Martin and sons Ltd or Britz Bros Ltd, London in the stores' end of year sale. This again highlights that the land management practices of the highland estates revolved around the maintenance of land for elite blood sports, as the lairds and landowners needed their estates to be 'vermin' free so they could charge premium rates for their shooting leases for grouse and pheasant (see Patchett et al 2011). The stuffing books thus speak of the embodied rituals of deer stalking and 'forest' management that produced what Lorimer (2000) has called the distinctive, and contested, 'culture of nature' of the Scottish Highlands.

A tape-recorded interview (now lost)<sup>xvi</sup> with the firm's owner at its demise--Hamish Macpherson--also held at the museum, help to corroborate this assessment. Hamish had obviously known John MacDonald well and in the interview, recorded around the time of the

workshop contents' purchase, he divulges stories and anecdotes about the man and his work. According to Hamish, MacDonald, who had worked at the firm well into his eighties, had 'no equal for the range and quality of his work' in the town, as he covered everything from full mammal and bird mounts, to the fine paint-work required for fish trophies. Yet as stag heads were the prize most coveted by the constant stream of southern gentlemen travelling up on the twice daily train from London during the shooting season, John MacDonald as the firm's veteran taxidermist had 'mounted more deer heads than he or anyone else could remember'. During an average September-October, the height of the shooting season, MacDonald had to deal with over 350 items for mounting. This was made all the more demanding thanks to the firm's trade label promise: 'Gentleman's private collections attended to on shortest notice'. Hamish relays that such work could often be stomach churning as stag heads arrived somewhat 'high' (even though partly preserved and wrapped in hessian) after the several days' journey it took to reach the stores workshop from moors to the North. MacDonald's biggest single stag job, according to Hamish, came in the form of forty deer heads commissioned and shot by the Maharajah of Alwar, who had the shooting lease of the Ceannaeroc and Ardverikie estates, which he wanted to be mounted and despatched to India. This is indicative of Scotland's imperial ties. For example, as Lorimer (2000, 416, 414) has outlined, the 'deer forests' of the Scottish Highlands were understood to offer the perfect practice-ground for those wishing to take advantage of exotic colonial game, as 'deerstalking was felt to perfect the fieldcraft of those with sights trained on the wildlife jungle or high veldt', and thus Scottish sporting estates were a regular 'stopping-off point on the grand tour of many a peripatetic sportsman' and empire-builder in training. This also underlines how taxidermy skills were crucial to the colonial trafficking that made dead animals mobile and ensured their long-term preservation in entirely alien environments (see Patchett 2008).

By working in the grain of the things that remain to mark Macpherson's Sporting Stores, intertwined, and politicised, histories of blood-sports, landownership, imperialism, and human-animal relations begin to emerge. While more conventional routes for narrating the history of the store might be taken, the sociologist Kevin Hetherington (2001: 26) argues, that this form of material immersion and montage 'has indirect ways of telling us stories... about power, agency, and history' that could be missed through more direct forms of historical enquiry and representation. Thus while it is possible to engage in a more 'conventional' plotting of the history of all the taxidermists' workshops, to do so would be to place them in the annals of business history and unnecessarily deaden the life and death worlds of taxidermy craft that are so evocatively, if only fleetingly, glimpsed at through their material remains. And this is to emphasise that these materials, even in their textual representation in this paper, *count*: that they themselves create knowledge and invite affective experience of the past.

### **Craft(ing) conclusions**

'Sometimes, we go into a man's study and find his books and papers all over the place, and say without hesitation: 'What a mess! We really must clear this room up'. Yet at other times, we may go into a room which looks very like the first; but after looking around we decide that we must leave it just as it is, recognising that, in this case, even the dust has its place' (Wittgenstein, cited in Janik and Toulmin, 1973: 207).

It has probably been the outcome, if not the intent, of this paper to provoke the reaction described above when visiting the workshops of George Sim, Charles Kirk and John MacDonald. While it may be tempting to tidy up the fragmentary sources and loose ends presented, it is important to emphasise we can leave them in this way, recognising, as

Wittgenstein did, that even the dust has its place. Where dust is increasingly being emphasised as an 'authenticating ingredient' by historical geographers (Lorimer 2009: 247-8), a testimony to the labours involved in revealing forgotten or repressed pasts, for this author dust also invited a consideration of the 'unmarked' of the taxidermists' workshops, what Nigel Thrift has described through his theory of practice as 'invisible dust still singing and dancing' (Thrift 2000: 214). This required applying and developing non-representational theories and approaches to the use of historic documents and archival materials so that the taxidermist's leftovers could be understood and encountered not only as more-than-biographical and more-than-representational, but as more-than-human as well. However while these approaches helped to enliven the portrait, floor plan and collection of artefacts, by demonstrating how these sources, when supplemented with other materials, can put us in touch with the ineffable odours, somatic routines and animal agencies of the workshops, the question remains: what can conceivably said from those things that remain that mark the working of bodies and bodies at work at these sites? This connects to Benjamin's plea to 'unravel the meanings of the discarded items lying in these dusty corners' (McRobbie 1992, 161).

The implications of Benjamin's plea are twofold for geographers seeking to engage with and enliven partial and/or forgotten pasts. First, there are elements of the past that are deemed too partial for entry into conventional history, so we have an obligation to ensure a place for these elements. Benjamin's argument is that turning to discarded objects, fragments and the refuse of history might offer us ways of recovering a tradition, or traditions, of the oppressed. While the empirical focus on taxidermy connects immediately to historical geographies of empire and the elite, by focusing on redeeming the remainders of taxidermy practice we also gleaned vital insights into the craft and class politics of 19<sup>th</sup> century natural history enquiry,



the spectres of animal and human slaughter that inhabited a workshop devastated by WW1 and the more-than-human histories of elite blood sports and land ownership in the Scottish Highlands. Visiting the taxidermists' workshops through their remainders (both representational and non) therefore enabled us to witness not only the sensuous yet contentious human-animal relations involved in the crafts of taxidermy (including the mass slaughter of animals) but also the precarious place of craftwork in the practice of science and the wider economy.

Second, if a place is not found for these overlooked objects and documents, and the histories they tell of, they may disappear irretrievably. Thus while it has been important to work with a sense of the irretrievability of past taxidermy practice in mind, it is also important to remember the responsibilities on the part of the researcher to carefully assemble and curate the remainders which mark such practices. This academic commitment to piecing together evidence (in whatever form it takes) of past practices and places means that histories, like those of craftwork(ers) and animal life and death, which are usually obscured by more dominant forms of historical record and narration, remain to be told. This does not mean the conventional methods and sources of the historical geographer be abandoned altogether, however. As the analysis of this paper also underlines, creative engagements with, and the imaginative interpretation of, such methods and sources hold much potential for the possibilities of craft(ing) histories. Or as Philippe Jaccottet has more poetically put it:

When the workplace, the loom, the cloth itself

Have all evaporated

We ought to discover footprints in the damp earth

(from *Things Seen*, Philippe Jaccottet 1994[1983], 49).

Differently figuring the working of bodies and bodies at work in this paper has enabled us to discover not just ‘footprints’ but substantial signs of the complex subjectivities (human and animal), spatialities and material assemblages of past taxidermy workshops. The paper therefore demonstrates the potential of geographical arguments and insights for enlivening and emplacing the histories of craftwork and craftworkers. Moreover with an increasing number of geographers demonstrating an interest in researching the geographies of craft and making cultures in the present, it is important to remember, as this paper has highlights, that such assemblages are *historical* and have their own historical geographies. Historical geographies of craft and craftwork are therefore in need of further careful attention, curation and elaboration as such work has much to offer the way we more broadly conceptualise, approach and study the (historical) geographies of practices and skills, work and employment and human-non-human relations.

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## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> This is something for which non-representational styles of work have been criticised: e.g. see Thein 2005, Saldanha 2006, Tolia-Kelly 2006.

<sup>ii</sup> It should be noted that there is a 'Guild of Taxidermists', representing UK taxidermists but that this was not formed until 1976.

<sup>iii</sup> This task largely encompassed drawing on the personal collections of taxidermists (active and retired) and taxidermy collectors, searching online repositories and auctions houses and visiting the stores of museums and galleries.

<sup>iv</sup> The following analysis is so constructed to shift attention away from the traditional 'spotlight' focus on the individual subject, an approach which has been much critiqued by feminist scholars for viewing the 'biographical' subject on individualised terms and for focusing on the lives of 'great men' (e.g. see Thomas 2004).

<sup>v</sup> The poster was recovered in an auction by taxidermy collector Pat Morris and was photographed by the author while visiting Morris' private collection. The poster kept on file under 'S' in his private A-Z collection on UK taxidermists.

<sup>vi</sup> Taken from 'Industries of Scotland' ledger entitled 'Scotland of To-day Part II: A Review of the Industries of Aberdeen, Paisley, Greenock, Port Glasgow, Gourock, Helensburgh, Dumbarton, Inverness, Kilmarnock, Irvine ... etc. etc.', Historical Publication Company, 1889, Aberdeen City Reference Library, Local Studies, Catalogue No. LO330.941.

<sup>vii</sup> We know this as the portrait also attributes the workshop to 14 King street and having visited the site the windows match those found on the third floor.

<sup>viii</sup> Rare since many taxidermists did not label their work and also because many examples of Victorian taxidermy have either perished, been destroyed or thrown out. The case was photographed at an auction house in Aberdeen by taxidermy collector Pat Morris and he was not able to follow its destination after purchase. His original image is on file under 'S' in his private A-Z collection on UK taxidermists.

<sup>ix</sup> J. A. Harvie-Brown Papers No. 42-75, National Museum Scotland Special Collections.

<sup>x</sup> The floorplan was in a folder marked 'Kirk's' that was loaned to me by retired Kelvingrove Taxidermist Dick Hendry. I retain a photocopy of all the files that were in the folder, including the floorplan that is reproduced here. A copy of the folder is also kept at Glasgow

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Museums Recourse Centre Natural History Section. The folder has yet to be accessioned but can be asked for on request.

<sup>xi</sup> I found out later that John McCorrisken would often visit Dick Hendry and the other taxidermists at the Kelvingrove and reminisce about his time spent there and Dick encouraged him to record details about the workshop and its employees in the form of a floor plan.

<sup>xii</sup> The letters are kept in the Natural History Archive at Glasgow Museums Recourse Centre. The letters have yet to be accessioned but can be asked for on request.

<sup>xiii</sup> The number range for the Macpherson collection at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery is IMAG: INVMG 1976/42/1-168.

<sup>xiv</sup> A proposal for the purchase of 'Inverness Taxidermist's Specimens and Workshop' that was put together by the Museums Natural History curator, Graeme Farnell, is kept in the Museum's file on the history of the firm and its redisplay at the Museum. IMAG: INVMG 1976/42/1-168.

<sup>xv</sup> IMAG: INVMG 1976/42/1-168.

<sup>xvi</sup> While the tape itself is lost a transcript of the interview is still held in the Inverness Museum archives and is drawn upon instead. IMAG: INVMG 1976/42/1-168.

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